



Competence requirements for ecological surveyors

1 General requirements and accountability

The pre-commencement ecology survey must be carried out by suitably qualified, experienced, and professional contractors¹. To ensure accountability, they should be a professional grade member (that is, a grade that has been subject to independent assessment/peer review) of a relevant professional body that has an appropriate code of conduct and disciplinary procedure, for example CIEEM² or ICF³.

In some circumstances the survey may be undertaken by surveyors who do not hold an appropriate level of membership of a relevant professional institute. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis (see below).

2 Competence

Assessment of competence is a two-stage procedure and applies to all potential surveyors.

Stage 1

Potential surveyors must have demonstrable experience of competence in relation to the survey and assessment work required (see 3 below). This should be supplied to FLS via a detailed CV including evidence of qualifications and experience of previous similar work (see 3 below). FLS may require further evidence, for example additional detail of experience or examples of relevant survey reports and training. This will be reviewed by an appropriately qualified member of FLS staff who holds a relevant membership (normally the Wildlife Ecologist, but other staff may deputise).

We reserve the right to request further detail if what is supplied is not sufficient.

Stage 2

An individual surveyor's competence to undertake the ecological survey work will be assessed following receipt of their first survey and/or mitigation plan. This will normally be done by the Wildlife Ecologist or the REA, although other staff may deputise. There will be three potential outcomes:

¹ A list of consultants can be provided on request. This does not constitute any recommendation

² Members at Associate (ACIEEM), Full (MCIEEM) Fellow (FCIEEM) grades only, or Chartered Ecologists (CEcol).

³ Chartered members (MICFor) or Fellows (FICFor) only.

- 1 Surveyor approved
- 2 Further information needed, or assessment delayed pending subsequent survey*.
- 3 Surveyor not approved

*In the event that the further information, or two consecutive surveys, are unsatisfactory, the surveyor will not be approved to undertake surveys on FLS land.

Site checks

Following the above procedure, FLS environment staff will occasionally perform site checks to ensure that survey reports accurately reflect what is present on the ground.

Note:

- The survey/assessment must be carried out in accordance with the specific requirements in this document and any other instruction provided by FLS, applying relevant industry guidance (e.g. CIEEM, NatureScot) where appropriate.
- Where purchasers have in-house ecological resource, this may be used to undertake the necessary survey and assessment provided it meets the requirements in this document.
- In the event that the surveyor does not hold an appropriate professional membership, it will normally be expected that the survey/assessment is reviewed by a colleague within their organisation who does hold such a membership. If this is not possible, it should be discussed with the REA or FLS Wildlife Ecologist prior to undertaking the work.

3 Specific survey requirements

3.1 Suitability of habitat and identification of species and habitats

Demonstrable knowledge/experience of habitat suitability for and of identifying signs, calls or other indications of the presence of:

- Protected/priority species likely to be present either in the woodland or within its zone of influence, including (but not limited to) bats, badger, beaver, otter, pine marten, water vole, red squirrel, raptors and other nesting birds, freshwater pearl mussel, great crested newt, reptiles

3.2 Knowledge of mitigation measures

Demonstrable knowledge of accepted and appropriate mitigation measures relevant to the features listed in 3.1, including timing, working methods, buffers, barriers etc.

3.3 Licence requirements

Where necessary, surveyors must hold the appropriate licences to conduct surveys for protected species and must provide evidence of this.

3.4 *Specific requirements in relation to red squirrel*

- Demonstrable knowledge of habitat suitability for and the identification of signs or other indications of the presence of red squirrels
- Ability to use appropriate methods to determine species
- Ability to assess and describe appropriate mitigation requirements

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